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MESSAGE

OF THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

COMMUNICATING,

In compliance with a resolution of the Senate of the 24th instant, information in regard to the alleged enlistment in foreign countries of recruits for the military and naval service of the United States.

JUNE 28, 1864.—Read, referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations, and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate of the United States:

In answer to the resolution of the Senate of the 24th instant, requesting information in regard to the alleged enlistment in foreign countries of recruits for the military and naval service of the United States, I transmit reports from the Secretaries of State, of War, and of the Navy, respectively.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

WASHINGTON, *June* 28, 1864.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, June 25, 1864.

The Secretary of State, to whom has been referred the resolution of the Senate of the 24th instant, requesting the President to inform that body "if any authority has been given any one, either in this country or elsewhere, to obtain recruits in Ireland or Canada for our army or navy; and whether any such recruits have been obtained, or whether, to the knowledge of the government, Irishmen or Canadians have been induced to emigrate to this country in order to be recruited; and if so, what measures, if any, have been adopted in order to arrest such conduct," has the honor, in reply to the inquiries thus submitted, to report, that no authority has been given by the Executive of this government, or by any executive department, to any one, either in this country or elsewhere, to obtain recruits either in Ireland, or in Canada, or in any foreign country, for either the army or the navy of the United States; and on the contrary, that whenever application for such authority has been made, it has been refused and absolutely withheld.

If any such recruits have been obtained, either in the provinces named in the resolution, or in any foreign country, they have been obtained by persons who are not even citizens of the United States, but subjects or citizens of the country where the recruits were obtained. The persons who obtained such recruits,

if any were so obtained, were answerable to the laws of the foreign province or country where their offences were committed, and at the same time they were not within the reach of our own laws and tribunals; and such persons acted without any authority or consent, and even without the knowledge of this government. This government has no knowledge that any such recruits have been obtained in the provinces named, or in any foreign country. In two or three instances it has been reported to this department that recruiting agents crossed the Canadian frontier, without authority, with a view to engage recruits or reclaim deserters. The complaints thus made were immediately investigated, the proceedings of such recruiting agents were promptly disavowed and condemned, the recruits or deserters, if any had been brought into the United States, were at once returned, and the offending agents were dismissed from the public service.

In the land and naval forces of the United States there are found not only some Canadians, some Englishmen, and some Irishmen, but also many subjects of continental European powers. All of these persons were voluntary immigrants into the United States. They enlisted after their arrival on our shores, of their own free accord, within our own limits and jurisdiction, and not in any foreign country. The executive government has no knowledge of the nature of the special inducements which led these volunteers to emigrate from their native countries, or of the purposes for which they emigrated. It has, however, neither directly nor indirectly invited their immigration by any offers of employment in the military or naval service. When such persons were found within the United States, exactly the same inducements to military service were open to them which by authority of law were offered at the same time to citizens of the United States.

Having thus answered the inquiries contained in the resolution of the Senate, the Secretary of State might here without impropriety close this report. Nevertheless, the occasion is a proper one for noticing complaints on the subject of recruitment in our army and navy which have recently found utterance in the British House of Lords. The Secretary of State has, therefore, further to report that the government of the United States has practiced the most scrupulous care in preventing and avoiding in Great Britain, and in all other foreign countries, any violation of international or municipal laws in regard to the enlistment of soldiers and seamen.

Moreover, when the British government, or any other foreign government, has complained of any alleged violation of the rights of its subjects within the United States, this government has listened to the complaints patiently, investigated them promptly, and where redress was found due, and was practicable, has cheerfully accorded it. This government, on the other hand, has been obliged to submit, in the ordinary way, grave complaints of the enlistment, equipment, and periodical payment in British ports of seamen and mariners employed in making unauthorized war from such ports against the United States.

It is a notorious fact, manifest to all the world, that a vigorous and continual tide of emigration is flowing from Europe, and especially from portions of the British empire, and from Germany and Sweden, into the United States. This immigration, like the immigration which preceded it, results from the reciprocal conditions of industrial and social life in Europe and America. Of the mass of immigrants who arrive on our shores, far the largest number go immediately into the occupations of peaceful industry. Those, on the contrary, who are susceptible to the attractions of military life, voluntarily enter the national service with a similar class of our own native citizens, upon the same equal inducements, and with the same patriotic motives. There is no law of nations, and no principle of international comity, which requires us to refuse their aid in the cause of the country and of humanity.

This government does not repudiate or discourage immigration. The gov-

ernment frankly avows that it encourages immigration from all countries, but only by open, lawful, and honorable agencies and means. However statesmen in other countries may have at the beginning misunderstood the nature and direction of the present civil war, that nature and that direction were not misunderstood by the government of the United States. It was foreseen here that the seditious attempt to divide the American Union, if not discouraged by other commercial and maritime powers, would not merely produce great commercial and social embarrassment in the United States, but that, if it should be persisted in and protracted, it must seriously disturb the commerce and industry of other nations. Upon this ground, among others, the government of the United States earnestly remonstrated with foreign states against their award of unusual commercial and belligerent privileges to the insurgents, in derogation of the sovereignty of the United States. When, however, it was fully disclosed that the insurrection aimed at nothing less than to separate fifteen of these States from the rest, and to re-establish them within our own lawful territory, as one single independent nation upon the foundation of African slavery, this government did not hesitate, so far as authorized by law, to draw upon all the resources of the country, and to call into activity all the energies of the American people to prevent so great a crime. It further resolved to devote its best efforts within the limits of international law and the Constitution of the United States, first to bring African slavery to an end throughout the world, and secondly to strengthen the interest of free labor upon the American continent. It recognized and entered into commercial relations with free states founded on African colonization. It refused a market for slaves, and it pursues the slave-trader on the high seas, and denies to him an asylum on our own shores. On the contrary, it invites honest and industrious freemen hither from all parts of the world, and gives them free homes and ample fields, while it opens to them virgin mines and busy workshops, with all the privileges of perfect civil and religious liberty. So far as increase of immigration has resulted from the action of the government, during the present civil war, it is due exclusively to what has thus lawfully been done with those two ends of extinguishing slavery and fortifying freedom always in view. Nor has this government any reason to be disappointed with the results. The country has sustained a very destructive war for the period of three years. Yet it is not here that national resources or credit fails. It is not here that patriots are wanting to defend the country of their birth or their choice, nor is it here that miners, farmers, merchants, artisans, and laborers lack either subsistence or employment with abundant rewards. The number of slaves is rapidly diminishing, and the number of freemen continues to augment, even during the convulsions of domestic war, more rapidly than ever a free population advanced in any other country, or even in our own.

Respectfully submitted.

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

The PRESIDENT.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, June 27, 1864.

SIR: In answer to the Senate resolution of inquiry, passed June 24, 1864, and referred by you to this department, I have the honor to reply:

First. That no authority has been given by this department to any one, either in this country or elsewhere, to obtain recruits in Ireland or Canada for the army of the United States.

Second. That no recruits have been obtained in Ireland or in Canada for the army of the United States with my knowledge or consent, and, to the best of

my information and belief, none have been obtained, nor any effort made to obtain them.

Third. That neither Irishmen nor Canadians have, with my knowledge, approbation, or consent, or with the knowledge, approbation, or consent of any one in this department, been induced to emigrate to this country in order to enlist into the army.

Fourth. That no measures have been adopted by this department to arrest any such conduct, because no information of any such conduct has reached the department, and I do not believe that it has been practiced in any instance.

I will add that no encouragement or inducement whatever has been extended by this department to any person or persons to obtain recruits for the army anywhere beyond the limits of the United States.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

The PRESIDENT.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *June* 27, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the reference to this department of a resolution passed in the Senate of the United States on the 24th instant, requesting the President of the United States "to inform the Senate if any authority has been given to any one, either in this country or elsewhere, to obtain recruits in Ireland or in Canada for our army or navy; and whether any such recruits have been obtained, or whether, to the knowledge of the government, Irishmen or Canadians have been induced to emigrate to this country in order to be so recruited; and, if so, what measures, if any, have been adopted to arrest such conduct;" and to state, in reply, that no such order as that indicated in the resolution has been given by the Navy Department to any one, either in this country or elsewhere, nor is the Navy Department aware that any such recruits have been obtained, or that inducements have been offered to Irishmen or Canadians to emigrate to this country in order to be so recruited.

On the occasion of a visit of the United States steamer Kearsarge to Queenstown, Ireland, in November last, several Irishmen secreted themselves on board the vessel, were carried off in her, and when discovered were returned to that port and put ashore. This circumstance gave rise to a charge that the Kearsarge had violated the foreign enlistment act of Great Britain. Captain Winslow, commanding the Kearsarge, disavowed having violated this act or any intention of permitting others under his command to do so. Explanations have been made to the British government, and it is presumed the matter has been satisfactorily settled.

I am, sir, with very great respect, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy.

The PRESIDENT *of the United States.*

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